

Kansas Department of  
Social and Rehabilitation Services  
Don Jordan, Secretary

House Social Services Budget Committee  
March 18, 2008

HB 2965 - Fatherhood Initiative

Integrated Services Delivery  
Candy Shively, Deputy Secretary

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## Fatherhood Initiative

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Chairman Bethell and members of the committee, I am Candy Shively, Deputy Secretary of SRS. Thank you for the opportunity to provide information on House Bill 2965. This bill would direct SRS to establish a fatherhood initiative program, subject to appropriations, to encourage the formation and continuation of relationships between children and their fathers.

SRS attempts to establish and maintain fatherhood relationships today. The underlying goal of Child Support Enforcement is not just to collect resources for children, but to also connect absent parents, who typically are fathers, with their children so that relationships can develop.

One example of what SRS could do with funding from this bill is to promote early paternity establishment by expanding the existing program for in-hospital paternity acknowledgement, which is a collaborative effort between SRS and the Department of Health and Environment. The expansion would require an automated interface between the two agencies for the timely receipt of data. A digital, ongoing educational program for key hospital personnel handling in-hospital paternity acknowledgements would also be needed due to the high turn-over rate for these positions.

Currently, one fatherhood summit occurs annually in Kansas, providing a forum for parental education and networking and furnishing tools and information on how to build community fatherhood programs. Additional funding would allow a second summit each year to allow more individuals and organizations to participate.

If this bill is passed, SRS will work with communities and stakeholders to design fatherhood programs to meet their needs.

This concludes my testimony and I would be glad to answer any questions the committee may have.